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**DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION DISTRIBUTES
675 RAIN BARRELS AT GIVEAWAY EVENT IN SOUTHEAST QUEENS**

Rain Barrel Giveaway Program Reduces Stormwater in the Sewer System, Cleaning New York City's Waterways

Program Helps Homeowners Conserve Water and Save Money by Storing Rainwater for Gardening and Lawn Care

The New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) today held a rain barrel giveaway event at Roy Wilkins Park in Jamaica, Queens. DEP distributed 675 free rain barrels to single-family homeowners in Southeast Queens. During the spring and summer months, watering lawns and gardens can account for up to 40 percent of an average household's water use. The 60-gallon rain barrels given away at the event will help conserve drinking water and save homeowners money by capturing rain water that can be used for gardening and lawn care. Rain barrels can also help mitigate street flooding and keep stormwater from entering the sewer system, reducing the volume of water carried to the wastewater treatment plants during storms and easing pressure on the system. At previous rain barrel giveaway events held between 2008 to 2011 DEP distributed more than 2,000 rain barrels. DEP selected homeowners in flood prone areas in Southeast Queens for this year's giveaway along with people who signed up for a wait list after the last rain barrel giveaway in 2011.

"Rain Barrels help reduce flooding, make our waterways cleaner, and, by capturing and storing rain water, they also save homeowners money by providing free water for use outdoors," said DEP Commissioner Carter Strickland. "Since 2008, DEP has distributed thousands of rain barrels and the program has become so popular we can't give them away fast enough."

DEP's Rain Barrel Giveaway Program is part of New York City's Green Infrastructure Plan. Launched by Mayor Bloomberg in September 2010, the Green Infrastructure Plan aims to capture rainfall from 10 percent of the impervious surfaces in areas served by combined sewers, which carry stormwater and wastewater through a single pipe and can overflow into New York's waterways when they are overwhelmed by heavy rainfall. Over the next three years DEP will invest \$187 million in green infrastructure projects as well as other source controls such as rain barrels. By 2030, DEP plans to invest an estimated \$2.4 billion of public and private funds in green infrastructure to capture stormwater before it ever enters the sewer system and significantly reduce combined sewer overflows.

The rain barrel program also builds upon DEP's efforts to conserve water as part of New York City's Water for the Future Program, a \$1.7 billion initiative to ensure clean, reliable, and safe drinking water for nine million New Yorkers for decades to come. As part of the Water for

the Future Program, DEP will repair leaks in the Delaware Aqueduct that supplies roughly half of the city's daily drinking water. In order to make repairs to the Aqueduct, the tunnel must be temporarily shut down between 2020 and 2021. Ahead of the planned shutdown, DEP aims to reduce citywide water consumption by five percent. In addition to encouraging homeowners to conserve water, DEP recently announced a partnership with the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation to install activation buttons on spray showers in 400 playgrounds around the city that will save 1.5 million gallons of water a day during the summer months. DEP is also installing new, high efficiency fixtures in the bathrooms of 500 City schools to reduce water consumption by nearly four million gallons each school day.

Rain barrels connect directly to the homeowners existing downspout. Installation is easy and the rain barrels require little maintenance. Each homeowner was provided with an installation kit and installation instructions. Rain barrels should only be used for non-potable purposes such as gardening and must be disconnected from the downspout during the winter months to avoid freezing.

Participation in DEP's Rain Barrel Giveaway Program is by invitation only. DEP mails invitations to register for the Rain Barrel Program to single-family homeowners in neighborhoods served by combined sewers and several giveaway events will be scheduled over the next three years. For more information about DEP's Rain Barrel Giveaway Program visit www.nyc.gov/dep.

DEP manages New York City's water supply, providing more than one billion gallons of water each day to more than nine million residents, including eight million in New York City. The water is delivered from a watershed that extends more than 125 miles from the city, comprising 19 reservoirs and three controlled lakes. Approximately 7,000 miles of water mains, tunnels and aqueducts bring water to homes and businesses throughout the five boroughs, and 7,500 miles of sewer lines and 96 pump stations take wastewater to 14 in-city treatment plants. DEP has nearly 6,000 employees, including almost 1,000 in the upstate watershed. In addition, DEP has a robust capital program, with a planned \$14 billion in investments over the next 10 years that will create up to 3,000 construction-related jobs per year. This capital program is responsible for critical projects like City Water Tunnel No. 3; the Staten Island Bluebelt program, an ecologically sound and cost-effective stormwater management system; the city's Watershed Protection Program, which protects sensitive lands upstate near the city's reservoirs in order to maintain their high water quality; and the installation of more than 820,000 Automated Meter Reading devices, which will allow customers to track their daily water use, more easily manage their accounts and be alerted to potential leaks on their properties. For more information, visit nyc.gov/dep, like us on Facebook at facebook.com/nycwater, or follow us on Twitter at twitter.com/nycwater.

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